

The Ruby Heart

A Story of Feudal Times in Germany

By F. A. MITCHEL

The tourist steaming on the river Rhine sees high up on the peaks of either bank ruins of castles that several centuries ago were the homes of feudal barons. One of an imaginative turn of mind may picture those strongholds peopled with gayly dressed men and women, soldiers and servants. There lived the baron, descending now and again to the river, collecting tribute from merchants passing up and down, the lion's share of which he took for himself, distributing the rest among those who did his bidding.

In one of those castles, which now stand out against the sky a lonely ruin, dwelt the Baron Rudolf Eidenreid. Below it a little stream flows into the Rhine, and the baron had a boat station concealed by overhanging trees a short distance from its mouth. When a craft loaded with merchandise was seen coming a party would go down to this station and get out the boats, and when the merchant came opposite the mouth of the creek would shoot out to levy tribute. Some times the merchant would be protected by armed men; then there would be a fight, but the baronial custom house usually won, and the merchant would be forced to pay the duty.

Among the Rhine maidens of that time was Bertha, the baron's daughter. At times when her father was not at home, when a merchantman was seen coming, she would take command of the revenue party and lead them to collect the tribute. She was greatly admired by all the men at arms in the castle, who would not willingly permit any harm to come to her. But she was brave as the rest of them, and when she was excited by a contest to protect her was no easy matter, for she would often distance her supporters in moving against an enemy.

So great was Bertha's military ardor that she avowed no man should wed her who could not conquer her. She went so far as to wear on her left breast a ruby cut in the shape of a heart to signify that any man who aspired to her hand must be able to place the point of his sword at the spot underneath which her heart was beating.

One morning a party of horsemen was seen ascending the height on which the castle stood. The baron was away, and when these men entered the postern and stood in the courtyard, Bertha, looking from a casement, surveyed their leader. He was a young man slenderly made, but very symmetrical. His face was of an intellectual cast, and his long fair hair fell from his neck his velvet-plumed cap over his lace collar. Altogether he formed a very pleasing picture to the eyes of the maiden. But the massive muscles that could wield a lance or a battle-axe were wanting, and his was a strength of intellect rather than of flesh. Bertha opened the casement, saluted the young man and asked the reason for his coming. He announced himself as Count Hubert Rheinhardt, a messenger of the king, and he had come to demand on the part of his majesty a hundred armed men to join his army to fight against the king of Sweden. Bertha replied that her father was absent, but the messenger and his retinue were welcome to remain in the castle till the baron's return. The count accepted the invitation, and he and his followers were housed and their horses stabled.

Now, the barons of those days usually yielded military service to the king grudgingly. The kingdom, composed of separate provinces, was loose jointed, and the sovereign found it difficult to enforce his decrees. Bertha, knowing that her father would rather remain at home and increase his wealth by his deserts upon unlucky wayfarers, sent a messenger at once advising him of the king's demand, so that he might if he chose remain away until the party, weary with waiting, should go on to collect men and arms elsewhere.

But this was not the only reason for the girl's action. From the moment she caught sight of the fair haired count the spark of love entered her bosom and she decided to keep him as long as possible in the castle. So it was that Count Hubert was detained to fall under the spell of one full of woman's witchery re-enforced by great beauty. But the pity of it was that to win her he must be able to touch the target heart on her breast with the point of his sword. Unfortunately, his training was rather in diplomacy than in feats of arms.

When the little god enters the heart he does not always make himself known. Bertha was conscious of a commotion under the ruby, but did not realize what it was. She regarded it as a desire to attract the count as she had attracted other men, give him the opportunity to win her she had given them and beat him at the same game. So she entertained him royally and soon made him forget his errand to the pleasure he took in her company. His escort, being provided with all they wanted, were in no hurry to go on. Bertha, it was observed that they had no sides, it was observed that they had no other than that of their leader, whom they treated with great respect. Now and again Baron Eidenreid sent

a messenger to ask if the party had gone, and Bertha replied that they were still in the castle. The young man must have possessed a refinement superior to his fellows of that rude age, for though he noticed from the moment he met the girl that she wore the ruby heart on her left breast, he did not ask why she did so. Though he felt the effect of Cupid's shaft as soon as he saw her, he seemed to be resisting it. This only made her more eager to conquer him.

One evening just before dark a craft was seen floating down the river loaded with merchandise. Bertha, who was with the count, stole away from him and, donning her military costume, descended to the creek, took command of the boats starting to levy tribute and went out to intercept the stranger. There was a fight, in which the latter was worsted, as usual, and the tax paid. Bertha, flushed with the fray, returned to the castle and, ascending a spiral staircase leading to her room to change her costume, met Count Hubert face to face.

The sight of the girl, her dark eyes flashing with the memory of the fight, her raven hair that had come unloosened and fallen in a coil on her shoulder, her fitting costume displaying the grace of her supple figure, was too much for the young lover.

Whatever was the reason for his resistance to the spell he had fallen under, he broke through all reserve, clasped her in his arms and pressed his cheek against hers.

Disengaging herself, she told him the meaning of the ruby heart. "Alas!" he said. "I am no swordsman. I have been interested in knowledge and my profession is diplomacy. I have neither a taste for arms nor time to perfect myself in their use. Nevertheless I shall avail myself of my only chance."

Although those were rough times and Bertha was a real, not a sham, fighter, she did not mean by wearing the ruby that the man who would win her must stab her in the heart. It was intended to give notice that he must be sufficiently skillful to do so. She told Count Hubert that he must place the point of his rapier upon the ruby, leaving him to infer that if he went further he would kill her. The count was appalled and ready to forego the trial, but Bertha egged him on, saying that she felt perfect confidence in being able to protect herself. He side himself with a love which, he must take so great a risk to gratify, he consented to the meeting, declaring that if through a mishap he killed her, he would plunge his weapon into his own heart.

From the staircase Bertha went to her room, where she dressed herself in fencing costume, and instead of the ruby on her heart she wore a heart made of red silk, a much better target than the jewel. Rejoining Count Hubert, the two went to the armory, where, taking up swords that had already been used in such encounters, they put themselves in fencing positions.

Now the count, as has been said, was no swordsman, but a diplomat. Knowing that if he won at all it must be by diplomacy, he sought a plan that would bring him success by a ruse. But no plan suggested itself except one fraught with danger, and he was loath to use it. For an hour he faced with his antagonist, hoping to tire her out, but at the end of that time she seemed as fresh as ever, while he had lost strength. Then he determined, as a last resort, to put into practice his stratagem. Pressing his antagonist hotly, he forced her to assume the defensive, and when she did so, their swords being crossed, he guided the point of hers into a fleshy part of his right side.

Bertha, horror stricken, withdrew her sword, then dropped it. Hubert stood immovable till he heard the weapon rattle on the floor, then, taking his own sword by the blade, made a lunge and touched the red heart on her breast with its tip. Flushing his weapon away, he cried exultingly: "I have won!"

Summoning assistance, Bertha had the count, who was weak from loss of blood, carried to his room. A surgeon was called, but since in those days there was no remedy except blood-letting and the patient had quite enough of that there was nothing to do but bind up the wound.

One of the count's escort, hearing that his leader had been stabbed, rushed into the room where Bertha was bending over the wounded man, seeing his condition, shouted: "Treason! The prince has been assassinated."

"The prince?" exclaimed Bertha, aghast. "Yes, the prince—the crown prince."

"Peace," said the wounded man. "I have not been assassinated. I have met with an accident in play."

And thus it came out that Count Hubert was the crown prince, who indeed was making a tour with a view to assembling a force to meet the king of Sweden, who had just declared war. Bertha sent at once a messenger to her father, writing him to return and when he came announced that she was betrothed to the heir to a kingdom. When the baron learned this he was so pleased that he was ready to forego plundering luckless merchants and march himself at the head of double the force that the king had asked for.

Baron Eidenreid never returned to his castle, for he was killed in the war, and his daughter had no need of her former home, because she became crown princess, and afterward queen. So the castle fell gradually into decay, which was perhaps just as well for the traffic on the Rhine below. At any rate there were no more customs collectors shooting out from the mouth of the stream beneath the stronghold.



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Maiden Speeches.
A member of the British parliament writing to London Opinion of "maiden speeches" before that body says that the record in promptitude in this regard is held by J. C. Redmond, and that no one is ever likely to be able to deprive him of the honor, for he spoke twice and got suspended on the very day he took his seat. "The most modest man in the matter of a maiden speech," writes the M. P., "was Sir Robert Peel, who represented Perth in the last parliament. He was well over eighty when he was elected. He always spoke with splendid confidence of his longevity and seemed to feel that he had a quarter of a century of parliamentary life before him, and the maiden speech was not delivered." He recalls that the most notable of the maiden speeches was that of Disraeli, whose exaggerated gestures, amazing and unbecoming belief in himself and foppish dress all combined to produce an unfavorable impression. So this maiden speech was laughed at from beginning to end. It was then that he made his famous prediction, "You will not hear me to night, but the day will come when you will hear me," and that day came.

Donkeys in Trousers.
The stranger in Guayaquil, in Ecuador, at once remarks one very curious feature of its life and general appearance. We are used to seeing nets over our horses in the summer, but such an outfit as is required by the donkeys in the tropics strikes the stranger as ludicrous. The donkeys are numerous in the city and are used for all manner of light purposes, from baskets of fruit to the carcasses of butchers' meat. In the morning a string of them may be seen trotting through the streets with a load of fresh meat from the slaughter house, which is situated outside the town. The donkeys are all provided with coverings around the fore legs, like ordinary trousers, and with a protection over the ears against the mosquitoes. The Guayaquil donkey presents a most comical appearance in trousers, especially if his garment is embroidered, as it sometimes is.

How Japanese Speak of Death.
At Oosen-Gori of Iyo province a man's death is spoken of as "he has gone to Hiroshima to buy cotton." In the same province the expression changes to "to go to Hiroshima to buy tea" at Echigori and to "to go to Hiroshima to buy tobacco" at Nii-gori. In Buzen and Iwami they also say "he has gone to Hiroshima to buy cotton." The reason is that the people hate to pronounce the inauspicious word "death." But why they have come to limit the unknown destination to Hiroshima remains a mystery. A flag of Choshu they say "when they want to say a man is dead, but one knows not why Nagasaki of all other places has been chosen. In this connection it will be interesting to learn that the Eta in Chikuzen province will blunty say when they refer to a girl who has been married, "She has found a place to die at."—Dr. Emory Inouye.

The Popular Side of the Street.
Owners or renters of retail stores should look out for the side of the street on which the property is located. Illustrative of this is the testimony of a real estate expert in a recent case that ground floors on the west side of Broadway, New York, should lease for \$150 a front foot more than similar property across the street. The value of a retail business depends on the number of passersby, and the difference in this respect may result in a booming trade on one side of a street and only moderate success on the other. Some men are able to acquire such a reputation for their goods that the people go to them even when they are inconveniently located, but it is a good deal easier in building up a trade to put yourself on the route traversed by the crowds.—Leslie's.

Kate and Kite.
An English clergyman, visiting this country was discussing the English accent. "Your worst accent," he said, "is the cockney one—the one that turns, you know, 'make haste' into 'make 'ste,' and so on. I once engaged two maidservants. One was a Devonian, the other a cockney. They were both named Catherine, but that fact caused no confusion in my household. I simply called the Devon girl Kate and the cockney Kite, and they always knew whom I was addressing."

The Touch Courtous.
"I want to see you tomorrow afternoon at 3 o'clock on something important."
"What do you want to see me then for?"
"I want to pay you the \$5 I am going to teach you for now."—New York American.

Saw a Risk.
Clerk—I'm afraid I can't let you let you have that drug, sir. Customer—Why not? Do I look like a man who would kill himself? Clerk—Well, I wouldn't go so far as to say that, sir; but if I looked like you I should be tempted.—Washington Star.

Noble Thoughts.
If instead of a gem or even a flower we would cast the gift of a lovely thought into the heart of a friend that would be giving as the angels give.—George MacDonald.

What Every Woman Knows.
A woman always knows when a man is in love with her. A man often knows a woman is in love with him when she isn't.—Life.

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FOR COUGHS, COLDS, AND ALL THROAT AND LUNG TROUBLES
GUARANTEED SATISFACTORY OR MONEY REFUNDED.

ORDINANCE.

AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING AND PROVIDING FOR RAISING BY TAXATION MONIES FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES FOR THE YEAR 1912.

Be it ordained by the Town Council of the Town of Bloomfield, in the County of Essex and State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. For the relief of the streets of the town, \$21,000
2. For support of the Police Department, 16,000
3. For the maintenance of the Fire Department, 9,000
4. For regulating, cleaning and keeping in repair streets and highways, 25,000
5. For the relief of the poor, 2,000
6. For payment of interest upon the debt of the town as same shall from time to time become due and payable, 25,000
7. For the general and incidental expenses of the town, including the printing and publication of the Minutes of the Council, ordinances and such other matters required by law to be published, 12,500
8. For the maintenance and use of a Sinking Fund Commission as required by law, 2,500
9. For the support of the public schools, 50,000
10. For the police pension fund, 871,500

Ordinance adopted February 5, 1912.
WILLIAM HAUSER,
Mayor of the Town of Bloomfield.

Attest: RAYMOND F. DAVIS,
Town Clerk.

ORDINANCE.

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED "AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AN ORDINANCE TO REGULATE AND CONTROL THE FIRE DEPARTMENT OF THE TOWN OF BLOOMFIELD," ADOPTED MARCH 19, NINETEEN HUNDRED, WHICH AMENDMENT WAS ADOPTED AUGUST 1, 1904.

Be it ordained by the Town Council of the Town of Bloomfield, in the County of Essex, as follows:

That section one of the ordinance to which this ordinance is an amendment shall read as follows: Section 1. That the following Companies and Organizations and such other Companies or Organizations as the Town Council shall from time to time, either by ordinance or resolution decide to include, shall constitute the Fire Department of the Town of Bloomfield, to wit: Essex Hook and Ladder Company, No. 1, twenty-five men; Phoenix Hose Company, No. 1, twenty-one men; Active Hose Company, No. 2, twenty-one men; Excelsior Hose Company, No. 3, twenty-one men; Montgomery Hose Company, No. 4, twenty-one men; Brookdale Hose Company, No. 5, twenty-one men.

Ordinance Adopted February 5, 1912.
WILLIAM HAUSER,
Mayor of the Town of Bloomfield.

Attest: RAYMOND F. DAVIS,
Town Clerk.

California Perfume Co.,
New York City.

High Grade Perfumery, Toilet Articles, Gifts, etc. 5 per cent. of sales given to churches and charitable organizations. Local representative

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BLOOMFIELD, N. J.
Catalogue on request.

January 5, 1912.

ESTATE OF AUGUSTA SWOL

lastly deceased.
Pursuant to the order of Isaac S. Sorenthal, Surrogate of the County of Essex, this day made, on the application of the undersigned, executrix of said deceased, notice is hereby given to the creditors of said deceased to exhibit to the undersigned under oath or affirmation their claims and demands against the estate of said deceased within nine months from this date, or they will be forever barred from presenting or recovering the same against the estate.

GRETCHEN S. FRENCH.
Fitch & Fitch, Proctors.

September 7, 1911.

ESTATE OF GEORGE PETER

lastly deceased.
Pursuant to the order of Isaac S. Sorenthal, Surrogate of the County of Essex, this day made, on the application of the undersigned, executrix of said deceased, notice is hereby given to the creditors of said deceased to exhibit to the undersigned under oath or affirmation their claims and demands against the estate of said deceased within nine months from this date, or they will be forever barred from presenting or recovering the same against the estate.

ANNA M. PETERSON.
Fitch & Fitch, Proctors.

January 5, 1912.

Notice of Settlement.

Notice is hereby given that the accounts of the subscriber, the executor of Sarah R. Swol, lastly deceased, who was the administratrix of her estate, and who was appointed by the Surrogate and proved for settlement by the Orphans' Court of the County of Essex on Friday, the fifth day of January, 1912.

ADDITION H. MARKETINE.
Dated November 21, 1911.

November 12, 1911.

ESTATE OF CYRUS PARSONS.

lastly deceased.
Pursuant to the order of Isaac S. Sorenthal, Surrogate of the County of Essex, this day made, on the application of the undersigned, executrix of said deceased, notice is hereby given to the creditors of said deceased to exhibit to the undersigned under oath or affirmation their claims and demands against the estate of said deceased within nine months from this date, or they will be forever barred from presenting or recovering the same against the estate.

CLARENCE ACKERMAN.
Barrett and Barrett, Proctors.

Harry Maier, the hardware dealer
Nos. 449-451 Bloomfield Avenue, is displaying a large new stock of Yale & Towne brass door knobs, and is also making a fine window display of general hardware.—Advt.